

THE DATE AND SIGNIFICANCE
OF THE TENTH HOMILY OF PHOTIUS

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AMONG the Homilies of the Patriarch Photius, the one best known to art-historians is commonly thought to have been delivered at the *encaenia*, on May 1, 880,¹ of the New Church, built in or near the Great Palace by the emperor Basil I.² This Homily is cast in the form of an *ekphrasis*, or rhetorical description, and contains some highly significant data on church decoration in the ninth century, a period of particular importance in the elaboration of the iconographic layout of Byzantine churches. The purpose of this paper is to prove that, contrary to accepted opinion, the Homily of Photius has no connection with the New Church (or Nea), that it was delivered at the *encaenia*, in 864, of the Palace church of Our Lady of the Pharos, and that the description is of that church.³ We add some notes on the bearing which this revised interpretation has on problems of ninth-century Byzantine art history.

Eighteen Homilies of Photius survive, including the two published in 1954 by Messrs. Kournoutos and Laourdas from a ms. now in the National Library of Greece.⁴ These Homilies seem to form a special collection in which the one under consideration occupies the tenth place. All the remaining Homilies, insofar as they can be dated on internal evidence, belong to the period of Photius' first patriarchate (858–867). It was not quite impossible that there should be a single exception to this rule; but at least the balance of probability seemed to incline to the hypothesis that no. 10 also was datable before 867. This consideration drew our attention more closely to its title and text.

Homily no. 10 has been accessible to Western scholarship for exactly three centuries. It was first published by Peter Lambeck (Lambecius) in his notes on (Pseudo-) Codinus under the title *Φωτίου πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἑκφασίς (sic) τῆς ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις (sic) νέας ἐκκλησίας*

¹ Actually, most authorities place this event in 881 on the basis of the long discredited chronology of Pseudo-Symeon (*Scriptores post Theophanem* [Bonn] p. 692). A Vogt (*Basile I*^{re} [Paris, 1908], p. 398, n. 4) has shown that May 1, 880 is the correct date.

² *Photii Orationes et Homiliae LXXXIII*, ed. St. D'Aristarchis, II (Constantinople, 1900) pp. 428–439; Georgius Codinus (Bonn) pp. 194–202; *PG*, 102, coll. 564–573.

³ We are happy to learn that Prof. St. Kyriakidis of the University of Thessalonica has independently reached a similar conclusion. At the moment when this study was going to press, we received an article by B. Laourdas, 'Ο πατριάρχης Φώτιος καὶ ἡ ἐποχή του, in *Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμᾶς*, XXXVIII (Thessalonica, 1955) pp. 152–160. The author, who has worked in collaboration with Prof. Kyriakidis, states (p. 159) that Homily no. 10 was delivered at the *encaenia* of the famous church of the Theotokos "inside the palace of the Magnaura," and that "this church . . . is known to us from the descriptions of Constantine Porphyrogenitus and Nicholas Mesarites." Also *Ἑλληνικά*, XIV (1955) pp. 168–170. (Last item added in proof.)

⁴ *Θεολογία*, XXV (1954) pp. 188–200. On the manuscript (no. 2756) see also J. Darrouzès in *Revue des ét. byz.*, XII (1954) pp. 183–186.

τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου, ὑπὸ Βασιλείου τοῦ Μακεδόνοιο οἰκοδομηθείσης.⁵ It was reprinted, under the same title, with Latin translation and notes, by Combefis⁶ who comments: *edidit Graecè Lambecius è Regiâ Luparâ*.⁷ This does not mean, as would appear on first sight, that the ms. used by Lambeck was in the Louvre, but simply that the text was published in the Louvre Corpus of Byzantine historians.⁸ Neither editor indicates from what ms. the text was taken. A few decades later Banduri reprinted the Homily under the same title⁹ and added in his *Praefatio*: *Hanc autem Ecphrasin seu Descriptionem primus edidit Graecè tantum Lambecius ex nescio quo MS. Codice, in Notis ad Codinum*.¹⁰ Nothing, therefore, is known of the ms. used by Lambeck, either as to the rest of its contents or as to its whereabouts. Banduri's words *ex nescio quo MS. Codice* seem to suggest that by 1711 it had already disappeared. It may have been in Paris or in Rome, in both of which cities Lambeck was working during the relevant period.¹¹

It was natural that Combefis, taking the title at its face value, should have concluded that the Homily referred to the Nea Ekklesia of Basil I, and that the Caesar addressed in the final paragraph¹² was Basil's eldest surviving son and heir Leo VI. Yet even so he was able to lay his finger on an important discrepancy, namely, that the Nea Ekklesia, on the unimpeachable evidence of the *Vita Basilii*,¹³ was dedicated to Christ, the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, Elijah, the Virgin and St. Nicholas, and not to the Virgin alone: *fuit illa dicata*, he says,¹⁴ *non uni Sanctae Mariae, ut Photiani huius Tractatus titulus praefert; at nec fortè primò, principaliusque*. Banduri¹⁵ accepted the identification of emperor and Caesar with Basil I and Leo VI; but very justly cited¹⁶ the words of Liutprand: *fabricavit [sc. imperator Basilus] . . . iuxta palatium orientem versus ecclesiam, quam Nean, hoc est novam, vocant, in honore summi et caelestis militiae principis, archangeli Michahelis, qui Grece archistratigos appellatur*.¹⁷ We may note,

⁵ Georgii Codini *Excerpta de antiquitatibus Constantinopolitanis* (Paris, 1655) pp. 187–189.

⁶ *Originum rerumque Constantinopolitanarum, variis auctoribus, manipulus* (Paris, 1664) pp. 296–306.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

⁸ Cf. *Catalogus librorum quos Petrus Lambecius Hamburgensis . . . composuit et in lucem edidit* (Vienna, 1673) p. 2: "Syntagma Originum . . . ex Typographiâ Regiâ Luparaeâ, Regiis sumptibus, in lucem editum." The Greek manuscripts were not in the Louvre at the time.

⁹ *Imperium Orientale*, I (Paris, 1711) pp. 117–121.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. ix.

¹¹ Cf. *Catalogus librorum*, etc. *loc. cit.*

¹² Aristarchis, II, p. 438.

¹³ *Script. post Theoph.*, pp. 319, 325.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 304.

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, II, p. 807.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 804.

¹⁷ *Antapodosis*, I, 10.

though Banduri did not, that *iuxta palatium* is not the same thing as *in palatio*. However, the evidence of Lambeck's title and the interpretation of Combefis and Banduri have been accepted by all subsequent researchers.

But even in Combefis' day other evidence existed for forming a more correct interpretation. Paisios Ligarides, bishop of Gaza, who lived in Moscow during the 1660's possessed a ms. containing sixteen Homilies and several letters of Photius. Whether this ms. was identical with one of our two principal codices, namely the Iviron 684 and the Metochion Panagiotou Taphou 529, or whether it was their archetype (in which case it has now disappeared), cannot be discussed here. At any rate, in 1670 Paisios made copious extracts of the Homilies from his ms. and presented them, together with a complete copy of the titles, to Heinsius, the Dutch scholar and diplomat, who was then in Moscow. Heinsius passed this document on to Emeric Bigot, who in turn gave it to Combefis.¹⁸ Later it was acquired by Montfaucon and has finally come to rest in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Suppl. gr. 286). Combefis, in his *Bibliothecae graecorum Patrum auctarium novissimum*,¹⁹ printed without comment the titles as given by Paisios, and among them that of Homily no. 10, with which we are concerned. The version of Paisios, however, differs widely from that given by Lambeck. It runs: τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἀγιοτάτου Φωτίου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ὁμιλία ῥηθείσα ὡς ἐν ἐκφράσει τοῦ ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις περιωνύμου ναοῦ. This version, which re-appears in almost identical form in the Iviron and Metochion mss., and in a truncated form in the ms. of the National Library of Greece,²⁰ has at least equal *prima facie* authority with that of Lambeck; and is, as internal evidence will prove, undoubtedly the correct one. It refers merely to the "renowned church in the palace," and has no reference at all to the Nea Ekklesia or to Basil the Macedonian.

When we turn next to the text of the Homily, it becomes at once clear that the government of the day consists of two persons, and two only: a single emperor and a newly appointed Caesar. At the beginning of the Homily Photius inserts a brief eulogy of the emperor whom he urges to explain, in his own words, the cause of the celebration.²¹ In the final peroration he addresses both the emperor and the Caesar in the following terms:

"Rejoice, therefore, among emperors most blest and beloved of God; and be thou renewed in thy bodily and mental prime that bears fruit in good

¹⁸ See Kunik in *Mém. Acad. Imp. de St.-Petersbourg*, VIII^e série, cl. hist.-phil., VII, 8 (1906) pp. 54-73.

¹⁹ (Paris, 1672) pp. 548-552.

²⁰ Aristarchis, II, p. 428; *Θεολογία*, XXV (1954) p. 178.

²¹ Aristarchis, II, pp. 429-430.

works. As thou celebratest the inauguration both of the Renowned Church and of the works of thy wisdom and thy hand, do thou 'bend thy bow and prosper and rule because of truth and meekness and righteousness' [Ps. 44:5]; for thou art guided, as is plain to see, and shalt be guided by the right hand of the Most High, who formed thee and anointed thee from the cradle itself to be king of His own peculiar people. Rejoice with him and be with him renewed thou also, pride of all Caesars whom the sun has looked upon, who surpassest thy predecessors in wisdom and intelligence and in the fact that thou hast received this high office by divine ordinance and not through ambition nor the canvassing of men. Join, therefore, in rejoicing and renewing thy spirits with him who has taken thee as partner and sharer in the kingship for the common salvation of the subjects and as befits thy affection and most sincere love for him. For it is through you twain [διὰ γὰρ τῆς ὑμετέρας δυνάδως] that the Trinity, piously worshipped and revered, while spreading and conveying to all Her providence, steers wisely and governs the subjects."²²

The emperor and the Caesar are, therefore, the Pair, or Dyad, through whom the Trinity has chosen to rule.²³ At no time during the reign of Basil I were these conditions in force. None of Basil's sons was ever Caesar. At the time of the *encaenia* of Basil's Nea Ekklesia (May 1, 880) there were not two emperors, but three: Basil himself, Leo and Alexander.²⁴ There is no reason whatever to believe that Photius could in 880 have described Leo VI, already crowned *basileus* in 870,²⁵ as Caesar merely because he was heir-apparent.²⁶ And there is ample reason to think that, even had the term been applicable, Photius would have avoided it, since the word would have had painful and embarrassing associations for Basil himself.

Who then are the persons referred to? The emperor is Michael III and the Caesar is his uncle Bardas. All difficulties vanish on this hypothesis. The

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 437-438.

²³ In the Homily delivered after the Council of 867 (Aristarchis, II, p. 326) Photius calls Michael and Basil an "admirable Dyad." Had there been three emperors at the time when Homily no. 10 was spoken, as was the case in 880, Photius would not have missed a *bon mot* about the imperial Trinity reflecting the celestial Trinity. In an after-dinner speech delivered in 901 or 902, Arethas says that after Leo's reconciliation with his father Basil (in 886), imperial processions were adorned with the splendour and unity of a Trinity (Basil, Leo and Alexander) instead of a Dyad which denotes division (*B.Z.*, XLVII [1954] p. 40, line 81). Similarly, when some people urged Constantine IV to crown his two brothers, they cried, "We believe in the Trinity; let us crown the three!" (Theophanes, ed. De Boor, p. 352).

²⁴ Cf. Fischer in *B.Z.*, V (1896) pp. 137-139.

²⁵ Anastasius Bibliothecarius in Mansi, XVI, col. 143 A. Cf. Hirsch, *Byzantinische Studien* (Leipzig, 1876) p. 167, n. 3.

²⁶ For the rank of Caesar, see Guiland in *Orientalia Christiana periodica*, XIII (1947) pp. 169-177; Bury, *Imperial Administrative System* (London, 1911) p. 36. For Caesars in the ninth and tenth centuries, see Ostrogorsky-Stein in *Byzantion*, VII (1932) pp. 226-227.

tenth Homily takes its place with the other seventeen in Photius' first patriarchate, and the two rulers are seen to be in fact what they are called: a single emperor and a Caesar. Once this is realized, it is instructive to turn back to a note appended by Paisios Ligarides to his excerpt from this Homily, which has been printed both by Aristarchis²⁷ and by Jernstedt;²⁸ here Paisios at first identifies the emperor with Michael III and the Caesar with Bardas, although his final conclusion is that Michael and Basil, whom he wrongly states to have been proclaimed Caesar, are the persons described. But he was so right, or so nearly right, that it is strange his note should not have been more seriously considered by later generations.

The Homily provides much additional evidence that Michael III is the emperor of whom Photius is speaking. Take, for instance, the following passage:

"Tell us then, most Christ-loving and pious of emperors, who both surpassest all thy predecessors and honourest them splendidly by sharing in the office, tell an audience which, as thou seest, is eager to listen, for what reason thou hast called us together. Show in words what thou hast already shown in deeds. Hast thou again won victories and trophies over the barbarians, with which time and time again thou hast graciously greeted us, and is this why thou hast convoked us, to gladden us and at the same time to send up in common our universal thanks to Him who has granted the victory? Or, having received new tributaries and humbled the bold and insolent mind of the foreigner, is it to ascribe with pious intent all thy achievements to God's strong hand? Or hast thou re-erected subject cities which have long lain low, and built others from the foundation, and repopulated others, and consolidated the boundaries of the empire?"²⁹

Here Photius is applying to the emperor several of the conventional categories of the classical *enkômion*, but each of them has a topical and contemporary relevance. The emperor has won a series of victories over one set of barbarians; others he has brought under his sway by treaty, and has humbled their pride. This no doubt refers to the two great victories over the eastern Saracens in September and October of 863;³⁰ and to the humbling of Bulgaria, without fighting, in the spring of 864,³¹ which was, as we shall see in a moment, the year in which this Homily was delivered. We are also told that the emperor has re-erected cities which had long been cast down; the

²⁷ II, pp. 422-424.

²⁸ *Mém. Acad. Imp. de St. Pétersbourg*, VIII^e série, *cl. hist.-phil.*, VII, 8 (1906) pp. 24-25.

²⁹ Aristarchis, II, pp. 429-430.

³⁰ Cf. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, I (Brussels, 1935) pp. 251-256.

³¹ Cf. Zlatarski, *Ist. na Blgarskata Država*, I, 2 (Sofia, 1927) pp. 19-22; Vaillant and Lascaris in *Rev. des ét. slaves*, XIII (1933) pp. 13-14.

reference may well be to the rebuilding of Nicaea and Ancyra, which we know from inscriptions to have taken place in 858 and 859.³² Lastly, at the very end of the Homily³³ Photius refers to the emperor as *πιστῶ καὶ μεγάλῳ βασιλεῖ*, a title which occurs on coins of Michael III (but not on coins of Basil I), and which seems to have been peculiarly affected by Michael.³⁴

It is of course not disputed that the Nea Ekklesia was built by Basil I, and that its *encaenia* took place very probably on May 1, 880. Photius, who officiated,^{34a} may well have delivered a Homily on that occasion. But this cannot be our Homily no. 10 since no. 10, as we shall see, was delivered before 866, and the Nea Ekklesia was not begun before 875 at the very earliest.³⁵ What church then is the subject of Homily no. 10? It is a church built by Michael *in the very midst of the palace* (*ἐν μέσοις αὐτοῖς ἀνακτόροις*);³⁶ and it is a church of the Virgin.³⁷ It must be, therefore, the Church of the Virgin of the Pharos, the Capella Palatina of the Great Palace, which Michael III either wholly rebuilt or in great part restored.³⁸

The date of the Homily can be established within narrow limits. The *termini post* and *ante* are, of course, the dates on which Bardas was created Caesar (Wednesday, April 12, 864),³⁹ and on which he was murdered (Sunday, April 21, 866).⁴⁰ But we may say with some certainty that the Homily was delivered nearer to the first than to the second of these fixed points. The reference to Bardas' undertaking his high office,⁴¹ seems to imply that he had been created Caesar in the recent past. Taking this piece of evidence together with the references to Michael's military and political successes which have been discussed above, we shall not be wrong in dating the Homily between April 12 and the end of the year 864. This conclusion is

³² Cf. Grégoire in *Byzantion*, V (1929–30) p. 328; Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, p. 236. For the inscriptions of Nicaea, see A. M. Schneider and W. Karnapp, *Die Stadtmauer von Iznik* (Berlin, 1938) (*Istanbuler Forschungen*, 9), pp. 51–52.

³³ Aristarchis, II, pp. 436, 438.

³⁴ Cf. Grégoire in *Byzantion*, IV (1927–28) pp. 441–442; Aristarchis, II, p. 320, line 13.

^{34a} Pseudo-Symeon, p. 692.

³⁵ If credence is given to the story that in 876 king Ashot of Armenia sent a donation of 10,000 silver pieces to the new church. See J. Muyldermans, *La domination arabe en Arménie, Extrait de l'Histoire universelle de Vardan* (Louvain-Paris, 1927) pp. 139–140; Adontz in *Byzantion*, IX (1934) p. 246. Byzantine sources indicate that construction was under way in 877, since we are told that while the fleet was helping with the work of excavation and other building activities, news was received that Syracuse was being besieged by the Arabs, and before the fleet could arrive on the spot the city fell (May 21, 878).

³⁶ Aristarchis, II, p. 430.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 430, 438.

³⁸ See below, n. 67.

³⁹ Cf. Stein in *Mélanges Bidez*, II (Brussels, 1934) p. 899, note 2.

⁴⁰ *Script. post Theoph.*, p. 206.

⁴¹ See above, p. 128.

reinforced by a strong *argumentum ex silentio*. One of the formal categories of the classical *enkomion*, as reinterpreted by Christian encomiasts, was that of converting the heathen.⁴² Photius has mentioned the humbling of the Bulgars; but he makes no mention of their conversion, from which it is a fair inference that this had not yet taken place. Now, Vaillant and Lascaris⁴³ have shown good reasons to think that the baptism of Boris-Michael of Bulgaria had already taken place in the year 864. If they are right, our Homily was delivered in that year, after the successful demonstration against Bulgaria and before the actual baptism of Boris. The month and day of the Homily cannot be determined. Photius himself states that the day was not one of the ordinary feast-days, but a new occasion altogether.⁴⁴ Neither the Synaxarion nor the *De Cerimoniis* gives any special day for the feast of Our Lady of the Pharos,⁴⁵ which may have been deliberately suppressed by the emperors of the Macedonian dynasty.

It may be added that the restoration of Homily no. 10 to its proper place opens up the possibility that all the surviving eighteen Homilies of Photius are arranged according to chronological order in our manuscripts, a consideration which cannot, however, be treated here.

The re-interpretation of Homily no. 10 calls for certain adjustments in our concepts of ninth century Byzantine art. To begin with, we may review the descriptive elements of the *ekphrasis*. Photius mentions first the atrium (*προπύλαια, προτεμένισμα*) whose beauty, he says, left the spectator petrified with wonder. The whole façade (*πρόσοψις*), i.e. presumably the western façade of the church,⁴⁶ was covered with a revetment of white marble, so perfectly joined together that it seemed to be monolithic. Upon entering the church one was immediately struck by the profusion of gold and silver. Gold was lavished on mosaic tesserae, on plaques, capitals, cornices (*περιζώματα*), and chains. The holy table was made of a composition more costly than gold, probably incrustations of precious stones and possibly enamels.⁴⁷ The pyram-

⁴² Cf. *Vita Basilii* (*Script. post Theoph.*), pp. 341–344.

⁴³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 5–15.

⁴⁴ Aristarchis, II, p. 429.

⁴⁵ Cf. R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin*, I, 3 (Paris, 1953) p. 242.

⁴⁶ The west façade of St. Sophia had a revetment of Proconnesian marble, traces of which still remain. Cf. E. H. Swift, *Hagia Sophia* (New York, 1940) p. 173. Even if the use of *πρόσοψις* in the sense of "architectural façade" is attested only in rather recent texts, Ebersolt can hardly be right in supposing that Photius is referring to the marble pavement of the atrium (*Le grand palais de Constantinople* [Paris, 1910] pp. 131–132).

⁴⁷ In the Nea, the chancel-screen, the holy tables and the *synthronon* in the apse were of silver gilded over and set with precious stones and pearls (*Vita Basilii*, p. 326). On the great altar of St. Sophia, see Paulus Silentarius, vss. 720 sq. (P. Friedländer, *Johannes von Gaza*

idal ciborium over the holy table as well as the chancel screen with its doors and "peristyle" were sheathed with silver. The walls of the church, i.e. up to the springing of the vaults, were covered, as usual, with a revetment of polychrome marble. The tessellated pavement, a favorite subject in Byzantine *ekphraseis*,⁴⁸ was enlivened with animal and other figures surpassing, says Photius, the art of a Pheidias or a Parrhasios.

Photius proceeds next to a description of the mosaics, which is perhaps the most interesting part of the Homily. In the centre of the dome was a man-like (*ἀνδρείκελος*) image of Christ, who seemed to supervise from above the orderly government of the earth. It has often been said, starting with Kondakov,⁴⁹ that this was a half-length Pantokrator image, in fact the earliest instance of a Pantokrator medallion in the dome of a church.⁵⁰ This assertion is subject to the greatest caution, since Photius does not specify that the figure was half-length, much less that it was of the usual bust Pantokrator type. Photius' description of the Christ figure calls to mind a similar passage in a sermon delivered by Leo VI at the consecration of the Kauleas monastery. There again there was a Christ in the dome who seemed to oversee and govern the universe,⁵¹ but in this case too there is no proof that it was a bust. Setting aside the vault mosaic of the Capella S. Zeno (817–824) with its bust of Christ in a medallion supported by four angels, the earliest clear instance of a bust Pantokrator in a dome occurs towards the end of the ninth century in the church built by Stylianos Zaoutzes. In his description of the latter, Leo VI takes some pains to explain that the half-length figure, by excluding the lower part of the body, laid emphasis on the divine or higher nature of Christ which He retained even among the vicissitudes of this earthly life.⁵² The Pantokrator in the central dome of the church of the Holy Apostles, as described by Mesarites,⁵³ was probably of the twelfth century.⁵⁴ While, therefore, the type of Christ in the church of Our Lady of the Pharos cannot at present be ascertained, the possibility of

und Paulus Silentarius [Leipzig-Berlin, 1912] pp. 247 sq.); according to popular tradition, it was made of an amalgam of fused gold, silver, copper, electrum, lead, iron, tin, glass and precious stones (*Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum*, ed. Preger, I [Leipzig, 1901] p. 95).

⁴⁸ Cf. A. Frolov in *Études byzantines*, III (1946) pp. 55–58.

⁴⁹ *Vizantijskija Cerkvi i pamjatniki Konstantinopolja* (Odessa, 1886) p. 62.

⁵⁰ So N. Bees in *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, XXXIX (1916) pp. 250–251, and many others.

⁵¹ Akakios, *Λέοντος τοῦ Σοφοῦ πανηγυρικοὶ λόγοι* (Athens, 1868) p. 245; Frolov, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁵² Akakios, *op. cit.*, p. 275; Frolov, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

⁵³ A. Heisenberg, *Grabeskirche und Apostelkirche*, II (Leipzig, 1908) pp. 28–30.

⁵⁴ Malickij in *Byzantion*, III (1926) pp. 128–129.

its being a full seated figure rather than a bust Pantokrator, as was perhaps the case in the dome of St. Sophia,⁵⁵ should not be ignored.

Around the figure of Christ, "in the concave segments next to the summit of the dome" (τοῖς δὲ πρὸς αὐτῇ τῇ ὀροφῇ τοῦ ἡμισφαιρίου τμήμασιν ἐγκοίλοις) was a throng of angels (πληθὺς ἀγγέλων) escorting the Lord. The presence of "concave segments"⁵⁶ proves that the dome was either ribbed or gored, thereby reducing the area available for figure decoration. Taking also into account the rather modest dimensions of the church (as we shall see in a moment), we shall not be wrong in assuming that there was only one row of angels and not several angelic choirs, as was true in the church of Stylianos described by Leo VI.

In the apse was a Virgin with arms outstretched, i.e. the standing *orans* type (usually called Blachernitissa), as in the apse of St. Sophia at Kiev⁵⁷ or that of Nea Moni on the island of Chios.⁵⁸ The Virgin appeared as a protector, "winning safety for the emperor and exploits against the foe," for had not the Theotokos Blachernitissa averted the fury of the Russian invaders a few years earlier (860)? The rest of the church was decorated with individual images of martyrs, apostles, prophets and patriarchs, among whom David and Jacob are expressly mentioned. It may be surmised that some of them carried inscribed scrolls, since David, in the words of Photius, was crying out, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord" (Ps. 83:2-3); while Jacob, "How wonderful is this place; this is none other but the house of God" (Gen. 28: 17) Had Balaam been represented also (which, of course, he was not), he too would have exclaimed, "How goodly are thy houses, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the gardens are they by the river's side, and as the tents which the Lord hath planted" (Num. 24: 5-6).

⁵⁵ This is suggested by an inscription on the north tympanum. See S. G. Mercati in *Bessarione*, XXVI (1922) p. 211. Cf. Du Cange, *Constantinopolis Christiana*, lib. III (Paris, 1680) p. 30: *In interiore Tholi, seu, ut vocant, Trulli, centro ac testudine, Justinianus opere musivo Christum in iride sedentem, orbem judicantis effigie, describi curavit, ut αὐτόπται testantur* (which eyewitnesses?).

⁵⁶ All the extant mss. read τμήμασιν ἐγκοίλοις, i.e. "hollow segments." Lambeck read ἐγκύκλοις = "circular," but his transcription is full of mistakes, as a glance at Combefis' and Banduri's corrections will show.

⁵⁷ See Ajnalov and Redin, "Kievskij Sofijskij Sobor" in *Zapiski Imper. Russk. Arxeol. Obščestva*, IV (1890) pp. 268-274. These authors make the interesting suggestion that the composition in the dome and apse of St. Sophia, which originally consisted of a Pantokrator, four archangels, twelve apostles and Virgin *orans*, is a variation on the Ascension theme. The same remark could perhaps apply to Our Lady of the Pharos. On the similarity of theological content in the Ascension and Pantokrator schemes, see O. Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration* (London, 1948) pp. 19-20.

⁵⁸ On the iconographic type, see Kondakov, *Ikonografija Bogomateri*, II (Petrograd, 1915) pp. 71 sq.

The above descriptive data given by Photius should now be divorced from the Nea and appended to the church of Our Lady of the Pharos. It is remarkable that in his account of the former Constantine Porphyrogenitus should say nothing about the pictorial decoration of the interior. He tells us only that a barrel-vaulted gallery which extended eastward from the north door of the Nea was decorated with scenes depicting the martyrdom of various saints.⁵⁹ We can add from the *Book of Ceremonies* that in the north aisle of the Nea was a portrait of the founder, Basil I.⁶⁰ As for the pictorial programme of the interior, we have no information whatsoever.

The church of Our Lady of the Pharos stood in very close proximity to the throne room (the Chrysotriklinos) and to the imperial apartments,⁶¹ and among the thirty or so churches and chapels situated in the Great Palace, it was the emperor's chapel *par excellence*, the *capella imperatoris*, as Western pilgrims called it. As its name implies, it adjoined the Pharos, or lighthouse of the palace, which also served as the reception post of the fire signals sent from hill-top to hill-top across Anatolia whenever the Cilician border was threatened by foreign invaders.⁶² As far as we can tell from the sources, the Pharos was a beacon or lantern (*φανός*) placed on an elevated terrace, and was not a tower.⁶³ The church of Our Lady is first mentioned under the year 769, for it was in it that Leo IV was betrothed to Irene the Athenian.⁶⁴ It was there that in 813 Michael I took refuge with his family when he was ousted from power by Leo V;⁶⁵ and there that the same Leo was brutally assassinated on Christmas day 820.⁶⁶

⁵⁹ *Vita Basilii*, p. 328.

⁶⁰ *De Cerimoniis* (Bonn) pp. 118, 121. Antony of Novgorod (ed. Loparev, *Pravoslavnyi Palestinskij Sbornik*, XVII, 3 [St. Petersburg, 1899] p. 20) also mentions a mosaic of Christ by the lateral door of the narthex. Antony's editor believes, however, that this mosaic belonged to St. Sophia and that the account of it has been misplaced (*ibid.*, pp. XLVII, LXXV).

⁶¹ On the church of Our Lady, see esp. Ebersolt, *Le grand palais*, pp. 104–109; Janin, *Géographie ecclésiastique*, pp. 241–245. The exact localization of the church poses difficult problems which need not concern us here. The situation suggested by the St. Andrews excavators (*The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors* [Oxford, 1947] p. 19) has not been generally accepted.

⁶² *De Cerimoniis*, pp. 492–3; Theoph. Cont., pp. 197–8.

⁶³ Aside from the vague mention of a *speculum inmensurabilis magnitudinis* in Buondelmonti (*Studi bizantini e neoell.*, III [1931] p. 272), not a single source says anything about a tower. On the contrary, it is repeatedly stated that the watchmen (*dietarii*) appointed to observe the fire signals were stationed on the Heliakon of the Pharos, and upon the receipt of a message they lit their beacon in the evening (*De Cerim.*, p. 492; Theoph. Cont., pp. 197–8; Pseudo-Symeon, p. 682, etc.) A. Vogt is wrong in placing the Pharos directly on the seashore (*Le Livre des Cérémonies*, I, *Commentaire* [Paris, 1935] p. 182). The mistake has been repeated by Janin (*Constantinople byzantine* [Paris, 1950] p. 377).

⁶⁴ Theophanes, ed. De Boor, p. 444.

⁶⁵ Theoph. Cont., p. 19; Genesius (Bonn) p. 7.

⁶⁶ *Vita Ignatii*, PG, 105, col. 493.

The reconstruction of the church by Michael III is recorded by the chroniclers in the briefest of terms, which is yet another example of the deliberate hushing-up of that emperor's works. The numerous adaptations of Symeon Logothete, which go under the names of Theodosius of Melitene, Leo Grammaticus, the Continuator of Georgius Hamartolus and Pseudo-Symeon, relate in almost identical words that Michael III exhumed the remains of Constantine V whose magnificent sarcophagus, made of verd antique, he ordered to be sawn up and made into parapets (στήθια) for the church of the Pharos *which he had built* (ὑπ' αὐτοῦ κτισθέντι).⁶⁷ This incident is placed in the year 866, after Basil's coronation. It is immaterial for our purpose whether the date is right or wrong, since a parapet could have been added after the official consecration of the church. What is more important is the word κτισθέντι which presupposes a radical reconstruction,⁶⁸ a fact that is borne out by the Homily under consideration. Photius says explicitly that the church had been built by Michael (τοῦ νῦν ἐξοικοδομηθέντος ναοῦ), and, whereas his reference to "this renowned church" (τοῦ περιωνύμου τεμένους)⁶⁹ may hint at its previous existence and fame, the whole tenor of the *ekphrasis* points to a new building. Since, therefore, the church of the Pharos was completely reconstructed by Michael III, we may expect it to have conformed to the architectural style of the mid-ninth century.

The architectural features of the Pharos church have not so far been sufficiently elucidated. On the latest reconstruction of the Great Palace, that of A. Vogt,⁷⁰ it is represented as a basilica, although on the previous reconstruction by Ebersolt it had been shown as a four-column domed building. We know from Antony of Novgorod that it was a small church.⁷¹ It had a narthex⁷² in which on Holy Thursday the emperor distributed apples and cinnamon to the patricians, magisters and other dignitaries.⁷³ The narthex communicated with the nave by the "royal doors" (βασιλικάι πύλαι).⁷⁴ The right-hand (south) side or aisle of the church is also mentioned, for it was

⁶⁷ Theodosius Melitenus, ed. Tafel (*Monumenta Saecularia*, III Cl. 1 [Munich, 1859]) p. 174; Leo Grammaticus (Bonn) pp. 248-9; Continuator of Georgius Hamartolus, ed. Muralt (St. Petersburg, 1859) p. 746; *Id.* after Cod. Vat. 153 in Istrin, *Xronika Georgija Amartola*, II (Petrograd, 1922) p. 15; *Script. post Theoph.*, pp. 834-5; Pseudo-Symeon, p. 681. The Slavonic version of Georgius Hamartolus adds, "in the church built by Michael" (Istrin, *op. cit.*, I [1920] p. 516, line 16). See also *De Cerimoniis*, p. 645.

⁶⁸ Ebersolt (*Le grand palais*, p. 104) seems to have misconstrued this passage, which accounts for his statement that the church was built by Constantine V.

⁶⁹ Aristarchis, II, p. 436.

⁷⁰ *Le Livre des Cérémonies*, I, *Commentaire*.

⁷¹ Ed. Loparev, p. 19. *De Cerimoniis*, p. 257, lines 16-17.

⁷² *De Cerimoniis*, pp. 119, 137; there was also a side narthex (παράπλοκος; p. 257).

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 120. Cf. also the mention of a "middle portal" (*ibid.*, p. 257).

at the east end of it (ἐν τῷ δεξιῷ πρὸς ἀνατολὰς . . . μέρει) that the Holy Face of Edessa was ceremonially deposited in 944.⁷⁵ That may not have been the first major relic to have accrued to the Pharos church, for in the tenth century the True Cross⁷⁶ and the Holy Lance⁷⁷ were already there. The treasure of the church was further enriched in 968 by the Holy Keration⁷⁸ and in 975 by the sandals of Christ.⁷⁹ By the middle of the eleventh century the principal relics of the Passion were in the Pharos church.⁸⁰

About the year 1200 the sacristan of the church was Nicholas Mesarites who had to defend the relics from the rapacity of foreign mercenaries during the *coup d'état* of John Comnenus the "Fat." His account of this incident, though obscured by an uncommonly bombastic style, adds considerably to our knowledge of the church. The outer door, he tells us, i.e. the one leading from the atrium into the narthex, was a double door, made of silver and perforated (πολυποδὸν δίθυρον, δικτυωτόν).⁸¹ The south wall of the church faced a bath (λουτρών) at a spot where the lantern of the Pharos (φανός) was to be seen.⁸² This south wall was lighted by glass windows set in a wooden lattice.⁸³ Several bands of assailants tried to hoist themselves up through the windows (presumably the easternmost ones) and could look right into the sanctuary, where a dazzling array of precious objects met their eyes. The pyramidal roof of the ciborium was of silver, while the four supporting columns were sheathed in silver and gold. The "life-giving" crosses were completely covered with gold, set with precious stones and pearls.

⁷⁵ *Narratio de imagine Edessena*, § 64 in Dobschütz, *Christusbilder* (Texte u. Untersuchungen, N.F. III [1899]) p. 85*.

⁷⁶ *De Cerimoniis*, pp. 161, 162, 538–40, 549.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 179–180.

⁷⁸ Leo Diaconus, p. 71.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

⁸⁰ See Ebersolt, *Sanctuaires de Byzance* (Paris, 1921) pp. 17–29.

⁸¹ A. Heisenberg, *Die Palastrevolution des Johannes Komnenos*, Progr. d. K. alten Gymnasiums zu Würzburg (1907) p. 29.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 33: ἀνεπύσαντες γὰρ τινες διὰ τοῦ περὶ τὸν λουτρώνα τοίχου, ὅπου περ ἑώραται ὁ φανός, διὰ τῶν φωτιστικῶν ἐπεχείρουν εἰσδύναί ἐπὶ τὰ ἄδνα. Ebersolt (*Le grand palais*, p. 107, n. 3) offers a different explanation: "Par ὁ περὶ τὸν λουτρώνα τοίχος, l'auteur désigne l'atrium entouré de murs, au milieu duquel se dressait la fontaine, la phiale. Le mot λουτρών est synonyme de λουτήρ." The controversial sentence is, however, picked up again lower down: ἐπὶ γὰρ τὸ μεσημβρινὸν ἐκεῖνο κλίτος ἀξιομάχους ἀντικαταστήσας διὰ δοράτων τοῖς ἐπὶ τὰ ἄδνα διὰ τῶν φωτιστικῶν εἰσπηδῆσαι προθυμονμένοις, etc. Besides, the word ἄδνα can mean only the sanctuary, i.e. the space behind the chancel screen which, as specified by Mesarites (p. 35), was accessible through the windows (naturally the easternmost ones) of the south wall; whereas the windows facing the atrium could have given access only to the narthex. If our interpretation of this difficult passage is correct, two important inferences may be drawn: 1) the Pharos was to the southeast of the church, and 2) the south wall of the church faced a bath, which is surely the big bath built by Basil I on the site of the Phiale of the Blue faction (*Vita Basilii*, p. 336) and therefore south of the Chrysotriklinos complex.

⁸³ Heisenberg, *Palastrevolution*, p. 34.

Over the holy table hovered golden doves. Their wings were decorated with green stones, while in their beaks they held little crosses made of pearls.⁸⁴ It will be noticed that the costly composition of the ciborium, though a common feature in palatine churches, agrees with Photius' description.

Mesarites further mentions the *diakonikon*, which had a pillared partition (*διάστυλα*), possibly to separate it from the south aisle. Leaning against this partition, Mesarites strove to ward off the attack on the south side of the church.⁸⁵ The presence of a *diakonikon* requires a *prothesis* on the corresponding north side, and it may safely be surmised that the church had two lateral apses flanking the one in the centre.

By combining the architectural data given in Photius' tenth Homily with the testimony of other sources, we obtain the following picture of the Pharos church: a building of moderate size, with a ribbed dome, narthex, three apses and probably three aisles. This picture, though admittedly of very wide application, fits in very well with the style of the period, and it may be suggested that the church of Our Lady looked something like the one, now unfortunately destroyed, of St. Clement at Ancyra.⁸⁶ The latter has been dated on stylistic grounds between the seventh and the ninth centuries,⁸⁷ but the character of its brickwork points to the later rather than the earlier date.⁸⁸ Its dome, shown on old photographs, consisted of twelve concave segments separated by ribs.⁸⁹ The restoration of Ancyra by Michael III offers a likely context for the construction of St. Clement's, and if that were so, it would be natural to expect some architectural resemblance to the church of the Pharos. But even if St. Clement's is somewhat earlier, the comparison may still hold good. In Constantinople itself we probably have two surviving ninth century churches, Hoca Atik Mustafa Camii and Kalender Camii (St. Saviour Akataleptos), both of which, however, were originally of the five-aisled, or perambulatory, type usually linked with the Nea Ekklesia;⁹⁰ both, moreover, have lost their original dome.

To return to the decoration of the church of Our Lady, mention should be made of a puzzling passage in Mesarites which has been held to indicate

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 35–6.

⁸⁶ On this church see G. de Jerphanion, *Mélanges d'archéologie anatolienne* (Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph, XIII) (Beirut, 1928) pp. 113–143 and pls. LXII–LXXX.

⁸⁷ E. Weigand in *BZ*, XXXII (1932) p. 372.

⁸⁸ The mortar joints in the church of St. Clement are slanted ("weathered"), a feature that first appears in Constantinople in the second half of the ninth century. Cf. A. M. Schneider, *Byzanz* (Berlin, 1936) p. 13.

⁸⁹ Reproduced in O. Wulff, *Die Koimesiskirche in Nicäa und ihre Mosaiken* (Strassburg, 1903) pl. IV.

⁹⁰ See Brunov in *Vizant. Vremennik*, II (1949) pp. 150 sq.

the presence in that church of a pictorial Gospel cycle. After enumerating the ten major relics of the Passion (the "decatalogue") that were kept in the church, plus the Mandyllion and the Keramion, Mesarites proceeds as follows:

"Why should I tell everything at length? This is a church, this place is another Sinai, a Bethlehem, a Jordan, a Jerusalem, a Nazareth, a Bethany, a Galilee, a Tiberias, the Washing of the feet, the Last Supper, mount Thabor, Pilate's *praetorium* and the place of the Skull which, being interpreted in Hebrew, is called Golgotha. Here He is born, here He is baptized, walks on the sea, goes on foot, works miracles, and is again humbled before the woman who washed Him [ταπεινóυται πάλιν ἐπὶ τὴν πλυνόν].⁹¹ The woman bows down within [ἐνδοθεν],⁹² she [?] who raises from the dead not one, nor two, nor many an evil-smelling Lazarus, but numberless bodies in the grip of death, and even before death, and every day and every hour she brings up from the tomb and restores to good health souls laden with sin, showing us herein the importance of prayer, and when we ought to weep and how much to pray. Here He is crucified, and let the spectator behold the foot-rest. Here He is buried and the stone that has been rolled away from the tomb is in this church as proof of the story. Here too He rises and the napkin together with the winding-sheets are evidence thereof."⁹³

Heisenberg suggested rather cautiously that Mesarites may be describing a pictorial cycle,⁹⁴ a suggestion which was adopted by Ebersolt as an established fact.⁹⁵ If it was indeed a cycle of pictures, it was one of considerable complexity. The subjects (if such they are) are listed twice with some overlapping between the two lists; besides, the order has been somewhat confused. The first sentence refers to Sinai, which cannot be connected with any New Testament scene, Bethlehem (= Nativity), the Jordan (= Baptism), Jerusalem (= Passion scenes?), Nazareth (= Annunciation? boyhood and early ministry?), Bethany (= raising of Lazarus?), Galilee (= miracles), Tiberias (= St. Peter submerged? Miraculous draught of fishes?), the Washing of the Feet, the Last Supper, mount Thabor (= Transfiguration), Pilate's *praetorium* (= Christ before Pilate) and Golgotha (= Crucifixion). The second enumeration includes the Nativity, Baptism, Christ walking on water (= St. Peter submerged), Christ going on foot

⁹¹ Mary, the sister of Lazarus, usually identified with Mary Magdalen. See Heisenberg, *Palastrevelution*, p. 66.

⁹² I.e. inside the house of Simon the Leper where the scene took place.

⁹³ The footrest (*ὑποπόδιον*), the stone of the Tomb and the winding-sheets, which Mesarites quotes as material proof of the Gospel story, were all preserved in the church.

⁹⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 66.

⁹⁵ *Le grand palais*, pp. 108–109.

(= miracles?), the miracles, Christ anointed by Mary Magdalen, perhaps the raising of Lazarus, the Crucifixion, the Burial and the Resurrection. Speaking generally, a cycle of such complexity in the post-Iconoclastic period is apt to date from Comnenian rather than from Macedonian times. This conjecture is supported by the presence of such subjects as Christ walking on water, which is not found in the monumental art of the Macedonian period,⁹⁶ and Mary Magdalen anointing Christ's feet (cf. Sant' Angelo in Formis and Monreale). Taking also into consideration other instances of the redecoration of older churches in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (St. Sophia *ca.* 1070,⁹⁷ the Holy Apostles and the Baptistery of St. Sophia⁹⁸ in the twelfth century), it may be surmised that the cycle alluded to by Mesarites, if it actually refers to wall pictures, is of Comnenian date and replaced or supplemented the figures described by Photius. The need for a cycle illustrating the Gospel narrative may also have been suggested by the continued concentration in the Pharos church of relics pertaining to Christ, a concentration that reached its peak *ca.* 1150.⁹⁹

The final defeat of Iconoclasm in 843 was not immediately followed by the redecoration of all the major churches.¹⁰⁰ From the few instances which are known to us, it would seem that the process of *anastelosis* was rather surprisingly slow. The delay may have been partly due to technical reasons, such as the scarcity of competent artists after a prolonged interruption in the tradition of sacred painting. A more cogent reason seems to have been the strength of the Iconoclasts, towards whom at first a conciliatory attitude was adopted. At any rate, iconoclasm remained a live issue at least until 870. The revised dating of Photius' Homily no. 10 provides a new element for the study of the restoration of sacred images.

We can now give the following list of churches and secular buildings that received a sacred decoration at this time: Our Lady of the Pharos (864), the Chrysotriklinos between 856 and 867, and another hall in the palace before 867.¹⁰¹ The new mosaics of St. Sophia were not started until 867¹⁰² and

⁹⁶ Mesarites describes this scene in the church of the Holy Apostles (Heisenberg, *Grabeskirche u. Apostelkirche*, II, pp. 49–52), but it is not found in the account of Constantine Rhodius.

⁹⁷ Cf. *BZ*, XLVII (1954) p. 402.

⁹⁸ Antony of Novgorod, ed. Loparev, p. 17.

⁹⁹ There are at least eight descriptions of these relics, all dating from *ca.* 1150 to 1204. The last addition to the collection, albeit a temporary one, was the red stone on which Christ was laid after His descent from the cross. It was brought from Ephesus by Manuel I (1143–1180). Cf. Janin, *Géographie ecclésiastique*, pp. 242, 244.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. F. Dvornik, "The Patriarch Photius and Iconoclasm" in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 7 (1953) pp. 69–97.

¹⁰¹ *Script. post Theoph.*, pp. 145–146.

¹⁰² Cf. *BZ*, XLVII (1954) pp. 395–402.

probably not completed until the end of the century. The important church of SS. Sergius and Bacchus was re-decorated at the instigation of the Patriarch Ignatius between 867 and 877.¹⁰³ The church of the Holy Apostles may have received a new set of mosaics in connection with the consolidation of the building by Basil I.

It is not perhaps entirely coincidental that our three earliest examples should all be in the palace, in a place that was not accessible to the general public, and therefore not apt to arouse any Iconoclast demonstrations. The decoration of the Chrysotriklinos, described in an epigram of the *Palatine Anthology* (I. 106), was made after the expulsion of Theodora (856),¹⁰⁴ and consisted of single figures: Christ in the apse, the Virgin over the west door, flanked by Michael III, the patriarch (Photius ?) and their collaborators in the victory over Iconoclasm, while all around the building were angels, apostles, martyrs and priests. It has been pointed out that the pictorial layout of the Chrysotriklinos, consisting as it did of single figures in a hierarchical order, is closely related to the one described in Photius' Homily.¹⁰⁵ That there should have been a resemblance between the two monuments is only natural: for not only were they contemporary, or nearly so, but they were also situated within a few yards of each other, so that the redecoration of the Chrysotriklinos and the reconstruction of the Pharos church probably formed part of the same programme. The single-figure hierarchy, which now emerges as the formula adopted during the reign of Michael III, was also applied to the nave of St. Sophia, the decoration of which must have been conceived and laid out in Michael's last years. We find the same scheme somewhat later in the monastery of Kauleas, but by that time the narrative Gospel cycle was already gaining ascendancy.¹⁰⁶

Just as the political and military exploits of Michael III have been obscured by the efforts of the Macedonian propagandists, so has his role in the "care of sacred buildings." It is fitting to restore to his reign an accomplishment which, in the eyes of a Byzantine panegyrist, ranked equal to his political successes.

¹⁰³ Cedrenus, II (Bonn) p. 238.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. P. Waltz in *Byzantion*, II (1926) pp. 320-323. H. Grégoire has drawn attention to the resemblance of this epigram to the inscriptions of Ancyra dating from 859 (*Byzantion*, IV [1929] p. 448).

¹⁰⁵ Cf. S. Der Nersessian in *Actes du VI^e Congrès intern. d'études byzantines*, II (Paris, 1951) pp. 321-330.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. the Gospel scenes in the church of the Virgin *τῆς πηγῆς* put up by Basil I before 879 (*Anthologia Palatina*, I, 109-117).